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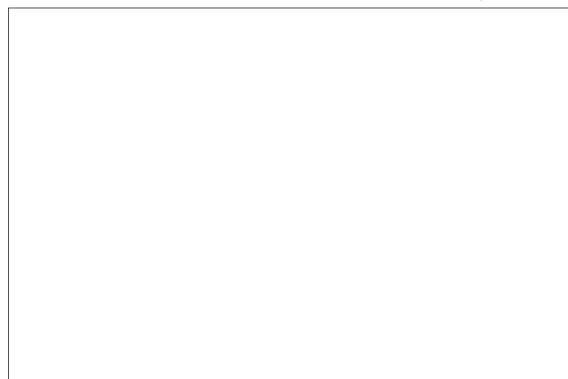
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Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO : Deputy Assistant Director for National Estimates DATE: 28 April 1953
Thru : Assistant Director for Operations *W.C.*
FROM : Acting Chief, FBID
SUBJECT: NIE-91

Attached review of Communist radio propaganda on Indochina is
submitted as bearing on subject estimate.

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COMMUNIST PROPAGANDA INDICATIONS BEARING ON
PRESENT SITUATION AND DEVELOPMENTS IN INDOCHINA

Summary and Conclusions

- 1 (I A 4) Viet Minh propaganda over the past six months provides the following indications concerning the situation in Viet Minh-held territory:
 - a. The intensification of Ho Government propaganda and action on both the foreign and domestic levels and the military successes of Viet Minh troops have largely been unable to counter the apparent decline in the morale of Viet Minh cadres and supporters, particularly among the peasantry.
 - b. The decline in morale is evidenced by charges of "unreliability" against cadres, lack of personal integrity, disregard for "public property," and laxness with respect to the "prompt and complete" implementation of Government orders.
 - c. Repeated calls for cooperation in the economic effort and frequent reiteration of long-standing failures and shortcomings indicate that the unfavorable conditions represent a constant source of concern to the Viet Minh. Emphasis on women's participation in all fields of activity and new regulations to correct "erroneous" labor recruitment methods suggest that the Viet Minh are still unable to exploit available manpower to the greatest advantage.
 - d. The question of peasant support continues to be a problem for the Ho Government. Marxist propaganda has in some areas failed to take root among the peasantry, and the Viet Minh seem forced to resort to coercion as much as to persuasion to secure peasant adherence.
- 2 (II B 4) Viet Minh propaganda and the policy statements of Ho Government leaders during the past six months indicate that:
 - a. The Viet Minh are intent on the implementation of a far-reaching political and economic program to create conditions similar to those which existed in the early stages of the People's Democracies, and in particular to those which developed during the first phases of the Chinese Communist regime after the victory on the mainland. The results of this program are apparently expected to aid in coping with the mounting economic difficulties that beset the regime, and in securing the adherence of the peasant masses who are publicized as the program's prime beneficiaries.

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- b. The Ho Government seeks to consolidate the dominant role of the Lao Dong Party and impose acceptance of Communist values in the areas under Viet Minh control, even at the risk of alienating still further various non-Marxist nationalist elements who are becoming increasingly disaffected.
 - c. The Viet Minh appear intent on broadening the scope of the Indochina conflict by giving increased support to Communist-oriented "liberation" forces in Cambodia and Laos, and by extending full-scale military activities to these areas.
- 3 (II B 6) The intentions of the Chinese Communists toward Indochina remain obscure in the propaganda. Chinese affirmations of support for the Viet Minh are couched only in the most general terms, while references to China and the USSR reveal no marked deference to one over the other. Certain belligerent and defensive elements, similar to those which appeared in Chinese Communist propaganda immediately before the Chinese intervention in Korea, have recurred with increased frequency in both Soviet and Chinese Communist propaganda. These elements, however, have thus far assumed no definite pattern and do not constitute a major component of the propaganda.

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COMMUNIST PROPAGANDA INDICATIONS BEARING ON
PRESENT SITUATION AND DEVELOPMENTS IN INDOCHINA

Discussion

A. (I A 4) Conditions in Viet Minh-held Territory:

1. Despite repeated propaganda claims that "the situation is more favorable" to the Viet Minh than ever before, that the Viet Minh have "gained the initiative" in the fighting and have driven the enemy into a "defensive position," and that the "forces of liberation" are constantly growing stronger and forging closer ties with the "world camp of peace and democracy" headed by the Soviet Union, it seems apparent that the intensification of Ho Government propaganda and actions, and even the military successes scored by Viet Minh troops in specific sectors of the changing theaters of conflict, have largely been unable to counter the adverse effect on Viet Minh morale produced by war-weariness. The failure of the Ho Government to make good its oft-reiterated promise of a "general counter-offensive" that would bring final victory, the continuously deteriorating economic conditions, and the growth in strength and striking power of the French Union forces undoubtedly are the principal factors that contribute to the decline of Viet Minh morale.
 - a. References to the "general counteroffensive" have become increasingly rare in Viet Minh propaganda. The last reference to such an undertaking is contained in a 1952 year-end Ho Cabinet report, which merely notes that the Government is committed to "lay the foundations for a counteroffensive and set up bases for final victory." The consistent failure of the propaganda to widely reaffirm this military goal, which in past years has constituted the touchstone of Viet Minh military propaganda, suggests that the Ho Government is sensitive on this point and aware of the limitations of Viet Minh military strength.
 - b. Although the strength of the French Union forces and the military abilities of Bao Dai "puppet" troops continue to be disparaged by the Viet Minh, the propaganda has recently shown increased concern with, and reacted more promptly to, announced plans to step up U.S. aid to the Associated States. Vehement and voluminous comment marked Viet Minh--as well as Soviet and Chinese Communist--reaction to the recent U.S.-French talks in Washington and to the Indochinese tours of General Clark and Marshal Juin. Viet Minh propaganda admitted that increased U.S. aid will create "a few more difficulties" for the resistance fighters, and urged the people to be "still more vigilant" against enemy maneuvers, tighten ranks more closely, and "struggle on resolutely toward final victory."

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- c. An indication of apparently poor morale even among Lao Dong Party cadres is contained in Viet Minh comment marking the 3 March anniversary of the Party's formal establishment. Central Committee member Nguyen Thuong Vu charged "some Party members" with "having betrayed their honor" by cheating in paddy and tax collections, "considering the Party without value," and putting "personal and family interests" above Party requirements. He urged "criticism and self-criticism" in order to improve cadre morale and performance. Popular resistance to Viet Minh policies was revealed in a Ho Chi Minh speech on the same anniversary castigating local Party cadres for failure to "fully carry out the policies of the Party, the Government, and the Lien Viet Front."
2. Charges of "unreliability" against cadres, lack of personal integrity, disregard for "public property," and laxness with respect to "prompt and full" implementation of government orders have become a prominent feature in Ho Government propaganda, and have been reiterated by Government and Lao Dong Party leaders on several recent occasions. During the past six months the Viet Minh leadership has been greatly concerned with economic problems, and repeated appeals have been made to the people to increase production and "improve the standard of living" of both civilians and soldiers. The participation of women in all fields of activity is widely publicized and encouraged, and repeated exhortations and new regulations to correct "erroneous" methods of labor recruitment and utilization indicate that the manpower problem is still a critical one.
 - a. An official report issued in January of this year on the work of the Ho Government in 1952 and its projects for 1953 criticizes the "poor" efforts of propaganda cadres, unwarranted "leniency" shown by local authorities toward "traitors and criminals," misuse of "national property," and the unsatisfactory results obtained in the Government's tax collection, production, and economization program. The work plan for 1953 specifically calls for more efficient tax collection and greater production to improve the standard of living.
 - b. The active participation of women in the Viet Minh resistance struggle, including guerrilla fighting, is detailed in a 15 April message sent by the "Vietnamese Women's Union" to the "Women's International Democratic Federation."
 - c. Shortcomings in the manpower program and concern with morale among workers and peasants conscripted for public labor were revealed in an October 1952 Ho Government directive, which criticized cadres for using "arbitrary" methods and underscored the need to "make people understand their duty" to join in the "people's labor projects." In a January 1953 Cabinet report, Viet Minh military commander Vo Nguyen Giap noted that the "replenishing" of the resistance forces was a task which must be "resolutely" carried out this year. No indication was given as to the source from which the additional manpower was to be drawn.

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3. A shift in Viet Minh propaganda emphasis, noticeable since 1952, from questions of over-all production to those concerning peasant life and farm economy indicates that the problem of peasant support looms large for the Ho Government, from a political point of view as well as with regard to a more complete exploitation of the country's agricultural potential. The stress laid on peasant welfare and the material inducements held out to the peasants in terms of land redistribution, lower taxes, and other rewards indicate that the Ho Government is attempting to stimulate increased food production, and is making an effort to counteract the effect which the Bao Dai land reform program may have on the political loyalty of Vietnamese peasants both in and outside Viet Minh-controlled area. However, the thorough manner in which the Viet Minh are attacking the agrarian problem suggests that they are not trying merely to remedy an existing situation unfavorable to them, but are apparently determined to establish the basis of a farm economy possibly designed to evolve along the lines of the present Chinese Communist model.* Marxist propaganda has apparently not had the desired effect of marshalling peasant support solidly behind the Ho Government, and the Viet Minh seem forced to rely on coercion as much as on persuasion in order to secure the adherence of the peasants.
 - a. The Ho Government's growing concern with the peasant problem was brought into sharp focus in the summer of 1952, when a series of tax reductions on agricultural products, particularly rice, and special exemptions for certain categories of peasants was announced in an apparent effort to increase peasant support and stimulate food production. Further evidence of concern with these closely related issues was revealed in an October 1952 Cabinet announcement that plans were to be worked out to stimulate the production of crops other than rice, in order to augment the food supply, increase the prosperity of the peasants, and emancipate the country from a one-crop economy. The agricultural plan for 1953 also calls for "encouraging crop diversity" and, in particular, for a ten-percent increase in rice production--an implicit admission of the reported rice shortage in the Viet Minh-controlled area.
 - b. Ho Chi Minh's call for "full implementation" of the agrarian reform in his Resistance Anniversary message of December 1952 underscored that increased material benefits, in the form of land redistribution and lower taxes, land rents, and loan interests, must immediately be made available to the peasant masses who constitute the overwhelming majority of the population and who endure the heaviest burden of the resistance. In return, the peasants were asked to have a "clearer understanding" of their duties, to engage in the resistance struggle "with more enthusiasm," and to support Viet Minh policies "without reservation." Subsequent propaganda emphasized that a planned improvement in the living conditions for the peasants would heighten their "enthusiasm" for the resistance struggle, and induce them to increase food production and "join the troops and...the auxiliary services of the army." Full "mobilization of the peasant masses" and uninterrupted implementation of the agrarian reform program were decreed as the Government's "principal task" for the current year by a joint session of the Standing Committee of

* See Section B 2 b on Chinese influence in current Viet Minh program.

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the Viet Minh "National Assembly" and the National Committee of the Lien Viet Front, held in March. The decision was ratified by the Ho Cabinet, which has ordered the redistribution among loyal working peasants of land belonging to "foreign colonialists" and Vietnamese "traitors," and the retroactive reduction of land rents and loan interests.

- c. Viet Minh efforts to counter the possible effects of the Bao Dai Government's land reform program include offers of land to Vietnamese "puppet" troops who desert from the French Union forces, and wide publicity is given to the allotment of land to Bao Dai Army defectors. Viet Minh irritation with Nationalist Premier Nguyen Van Tam's social reform program is seen particularly in propaganda blasts which deride the Bao Dai land reform as "an illusory distribution of land" that will never improve the living conditions of the peasants. Tam himself is bitterly assailed as "this unscrupulous bloodhound who now claims to be a revolutionary socialist."
- d. Although the confident tone and positive approach of the propaganda seem designed to negate in advance any implications of peasant resistance to the Viet Minh agrarian reform and intensified mobilization of the peasants, instances of punishment of recalcitrant landowners and other "reactionary" elements are cited. Ho Chi Minh's appeal to landowners to "cooperate voluntarily and on their own initiative" with the Viet Minh program carried with it an implied threat of drastic Government action if necessary. Vice Premier Pham Van Dong declared recently (in March) that a majority of landowners "continue the exploitation and oppression" of the peasant masses, and the Cabinet decree on agrarian reform provides for the establishment of "people's tribunals" to "judge acts committed against the land policy and the mobilization of the masses."

B. (II B 4) Indications of Viet Minh Intentions Derived from Statements of Party Policy and Measures Taken by the Ho Government:

1. The Viet Minh seem determined to carry through at this time a far-reaching political and economic reform program which will create, in the area under their control, conditions similar to those which existed in the early stages of the People's Democracies, and in particular to those which developed during the first days of the Chinese Communist regime. The results of this program are apparently expected to aid effectively in coping with the mounting economic difficulties that beset the regime, and in securing at the same time the adherence of the working peasant masses who are publicized as the program's prime beneficiaries. The Ho Government may be counting on increased material aid from the Communist Orbit to offset the curtailment of plans for industrial development which would seem to be entailed by the current concentration on fuller exploitation of the country's agricultural potential.

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2. The Ho Government intends to consolidate the hegemony of the Lao Dong Party and impose acceptance of Communist values in the areas under Viet Minh control, even at the risk of alienating still further various non-Marxist nationalist elements who have been disillusioned with the regime and are becoming an increasingly dubious source of support for the Viet Minh. The Ho Government may feel that the political and economic elimination of these groups will strengthen the position of the regime by removing a potential fifth column, and will leave the way open for a more thorough implementation of the revolutionary program. The most recent statements of policy by Government and Party leaders, and the measures taken in the economic and political field, appear to commit the Viet Minh to a course of action which will tie the Ho Government even more closely to the Communist Orbit.
 - a. A more vigorous assertion of Lao Dong Party leadership in the Viet Minh liberation struggle was first voiced by Party Secretary General Truong Chinh on the occasion of the September 1952 anniversary of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. Reaffirming the Lao Dong Party's role as the "revolutionary party of the working class," Truong Chinh demanded that the Ho Government administration--ostensibly still functioning as a coalition of "popular" parties--and the Vietnamese "People's Liberation Army" be placed under the "full direction" of the Lao Dong Party, and he reaffirmed that the ultimate goal of the Viet Minh struggle was the establishment of a socialist Vietnam. Subsequent propaganda has increasingly stressed the role of the former Indochinese Communist Party in the anti-French liberation struggle and has reiterated the socialist goal of the Vietnamese Revolution.*
 - b. The political nature of the "peasant mobilization" program is underscored by appeals to the "peasant masses" to "overthrow the reactionary forces" and "eliminate feudal elements"; the announced expulsion from the Lien Viet Front of "reactionary elements" and landlords who do not properly implement the new agrarian policy; the formal establishment of "class components in the countryside," consisting of "agricultural workers, poor peasants, middle peasants, rich peasants, and landowners"; the setting up of "people's tribunals" to judge "acts committed against the land policy and the mobilization of the masses"; and new emphasis on the "alliance of workers, peasants, and intellectuals" as the basic force of the Vietnamese Revolution.

* Reaffirmation of Communist Party leadership in Viet Minh propaganda may also reflect Stalin's exhortation at the 19th Soviet Party Congress that the "Communist and Workers' Parties" must assert their leading role in the colonial peoples' liberation struggle. References to Stalin's teachings in connection with the agrarian character of the Vietnamese Revolution may be seen as an affirmation of the Communist orthodoxy of present Viet Minh policy despite its emphasis on the peasants and relative de-emphasis of the workers' role in the resistance.

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- c. Heightened affirmation of Communist leadership and techniques occurs with increased frequency in all other aspects of the propaganda. Apart from emphasis on the peasant masses' "high revolutionary spirit" which must be harnessed by the Lao Dong Party, there is new stress on the development of "democracy at the local level"--that is, in the province and villages; exhortations for internal Party reform; the elimination of "lukewarm" Party members and of "bureaucracy and authoritarianism" within Party ranks. Party cadres are asked to conduct themselves in a manner worthy of membership in the Lao Dong Party, "successor to the former Indochinese Communist Party." In his Party anniversary message in March, Vice Premier Pham Van Dong called for the elimination of "kulaks" from local administrative bodies, and Central Committee member Nguyen Thuong Vu voiced the need to "increase vigilance."
- d. Intensified identification of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam with the Soviet Union and Communist China, in the context of both internal and external events, points up the increased emphasis on the "fraternal unity" of the international Communist bloc. China is honored as the example to be followed by all colonial peoples in their "liberation struggle," but every occasion is taken to reaffirm the primacy of the USSR as the "leader" of the world camp of "peace and democracy." The death of Stalin brought Viet Minh pledges of "unreserved" loyalty to his teachings, and an avowal by Ho Chi Minh of "implicit confidence" in the Soviet Communist Party and its leadership. However, the occasion was also taken to affirm Ho Chi Minh's position of leadership in his own right, in that his name was linked to Mao Tse-tung and Malenkov as a "disciple" of Stalin and as the leader who "correctly applies the principles of Marxism-Leninism" to the Vietnamese Revolution. Prompt praise of Malenkov and the new Soviet leadership, and absence of the usual deference to China in the Viet Minh comment on Stalin's death--at a time when other Satellite propaganda emphasized Sino-Soviet friendship and China's role--suggest a possible Ho Government bid for closer direct contact and liaison with Moscow.
- e. However, the direct influence of the Chinese Communists is evident in a number of pertinent Viet Minh propaganda statements and actions. In his September 1952 Liberation Anniversary review, Truong Chinh specifically pointed out that the Viet Minh drive against "bureaucracy, waste, and corruption" had not attained the scope of the "anti's" campaign in China. The Cabinet decision "fixing the class components of the countryside"; a "peasant mobilization" directive issued by the Viet Minh "National Assembly" which "in the present phase of the resistance" divides the people into "workers, peasants, petty bourgeois, and national bourgeois"; and, a Lien Viet Front exhortation to extend ideologic reform not only to the correction of wrong acts but also to the elimination of "erroneous thoughts"--these and other features of Viet Minh propaganda and actions are

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reminiscent of policies and actions undertaken by the Peking regime. In addition, there are frequent pledges by Ho Government leaders that the Vietnamese people and the Lao Dong Party will "diligently learn the thoughts of Mao Tse-tung and...the precious experiences of the Chinese Communist Party."

In his Lao Dong Party anniversary speech in March, Ho Chi Minh made a pointed reference to the "three great tasks" announced by the Peking regime--the intensified Resist-America Aid-Korea campaign, the coming all-China elections, and the Five-Year basic construction program--and declared that these developments would have "special repercussions" in Vietnam. Viet Minh assertions that Overseas Chinese peasants in Vietnam will be among the important beneficiaries of the land reform program point to the "peasant mobilization" as further evidence of Sino-Vietnamese unity and identity of views.

3. The Viet Minh appear intent on broadening the scope of the Indochina conflict by giving increased support to Communist-oriented "liberation" movement in Cambodia and Laos, and by extending full-scale military operations to these areas. Increased attention to the situation in Cambodia and Laos has marked Viet Minh comment since a Lien Viet Front resolution of July 1952 called for "the strengthening of the alliance of Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos, and the granting of more effective aid to the resistance in these two friendly countries."

Subsequent propaganda has exploited the "anniversaries" and activities of the Communist liberation movements with heightened intensity. The comment emphasizes the Laotian and Cambodian peoples' "determination" to free themselves from French rule, and features the "unity" of the "Vietnam-Khmer-Laos Alliance" existing between the Ho Government, the "Cambodian Committee of National Liberation" headed by Son Ngoc Minh,* and the "Lao Issara Front of Pathet Lao (Free Laos)" led by Prince Souvannavong. The independent action of the Cambodian and Laotian peoples' fight for freedom has been consistently stressed, with the Viet Minh role depicted as essentially one of providing experienced guidance in the joint struggle against the common enemy. References to Khmer and Laos minority groups in Vietnam which "actively support" the Vietnamese people's resistance struggle is a further indication of the Viet Minh's recognition of the independent

* Viet Minh propaganda has never mentioned the Issarak rebel movement headed by the Cambodian nationalist defector Son Ngoc Thanh. This avoidance is particularly noticeable when contrasted with the increased attention given to the "liberation" movement of Son Ngoc Minh, and with the repeated efforts made by Thanh's propaganda--broadcast over the clandestine transmitter, "Voice of Free Cambodia"--to demonstrate sympathy for the Viet Minh.

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"nationality" status of these two peoples.* Viet Minh awareness of the deep-seated religious sentiments of Cambodians and Laotians is pointed up by repeated allegations that participation in the resistance movement is synonymous with "love of Fatherland and worship of Buddha."

- a. The "duty" of the Lao Dong Party and the Vietnamese people to "aid" the Cambodian and Laotian revolutions, as affirmed by Ho Chi Minh at the time of the Vietnam-Khmer-Laos "united front" formation three years ago, is reiterated in the propaganda that publicizes the current Viet Minh drive into Laos. However, recognition of the Laotian liberation movement's "independent" status is implicit in the Viet Minh dispatches, which give credit for the victories to the "Laotian People's Liberation Army" and limit accounts of the Viet Minh contribution to noting the "assistance" rendered by the "Vietnamese People's Volunteers."** Specific assurances are also given that the Viet Minh "volunteers" will "respect Pathet Lao's national sovereignty and the persons and property of the Lao people."
- b. Up to the time of the current Viet Minh drive into Laos, Cambodia actually received the greater share of attention in Ho propaganda on the two "allied" countries. The infrequent references to Laos discussed "liberation" activities in broad, general terms, with some emphasis given to the participation of "Free Laos" delegates at the Communist-sponsored "peace congresses" in Peking and Vienna. In November 1952, Viet Minh sources reported a message from an unnamed "Foreign Minister of Pathet Lao" to Soviet Foreign Minister Vishinsky, thanking the USSR for vetoing the U.N. membership application of the French-allied "so-called Associated State of Laos and its puppet government." Subsequent Viet Minh propaganda shows slightly increased attention to Laos, with little change in thematic emphasis. The apparent absence of derogatory comment against the Laotian Royal House and the pro-French Cabinet contrasts sharply with the Viet Minh's vehement denunciation of the Cambodian King and his French-allied administration.

* Apart from the Ho Government's acknowledgment of the special status of the Overseas Chinese in Vietnam, the attitude shown toward the Cambodians and Laotians is apparently at variance with the Viet Minh policy toward other minority groups in Vietnam. Such groups are usually not distinguished from the rest of the "Vietnamese people," whose "indissoluble unity" is affirmed on every occasion. Thus, Ho propaganda denounced the "Autonomous Thai Territory" established by the Bao Dai Government as a French-inspired device to "divide and rule."

** The similarity between the designation "Vietnamese People's Volunteers" in Laos and the "Chinese People's Volunteers" in Korea is obvious, and represents a further indication of apparent Chinese influence. By identifying the Viet Minh forces as "volunteers," the Ho Government may also wish to counter possible charges of "foreign aggression" as well as reassure the Laotian population of the essentially "national" character of their "liberators."

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- c. Viet Minh propaganda has shown great interest in the situation in Cambodia, and has reacted promptly to events there. In contrast to the apparent minimization of the Viet Minh role in Laos, the Ho Government seems to identify itself more directly as the guiding force of the Cambodian resistance. The successes of the Khmer "liberation" forces are credited to the "correct line of conduct traced by President Ho." King Norodom Sihanouk's dismissal of the Huy Khantoul cabinet in the summer of 1952 elicited immediate Viet Minh denunciation of the action as a betrayal of the popular will. The King, in terms approaching the vehemence of Viet Minh comment on Bao Dai, was described as a "fascist...a traitor to his people." His recent interview in New York (18 April) was the object of comment by the Ho radio three days later which derided the King's sudden "change of heart" for full independence from France without further delay as a last-minute maneuver to save his throne with American aid.

The "victories" of the Communist Cambodian guerrillas are also featured in Viet Minh propaganda at a sustained level of relatively high attention, and a recent report (21 April) refers to the Cambodian resistance forces as the "Cambodian Army of Liberation." An 11 April dispatch notes the existence of a "Vietnam People's Delegation" in Cambodia, presumably "accredited" to Son Ngoc Minh's "Cambodian Committee of National Liberation."

- d. Viet Minh propaganda since the end of last year has revealed an air of expectancy sharply at variance with previous reticence and unwillingness to assume commitments. This element was brought into focus with the publication late in December of an 8-point decree prescribing the procedures to be followed by Viet Minh troops in administering and controlling the populations of newly "liberated" areas. The decree, both in content and order of reference, is an almost verbatim repetition of the 8-point army directive issued by Chinese Communist Commander Lin Piao in 1948 shortly before the fall of Peking and Tientsin. It gives elaborate instructions on the maintenance of public order, troop relations with the "liberated" inhabitants, punishment of "spies and traitors," and the disposition of public and private property, including the expropriation of properties belonging to "French colonialists and traitors." Subsequent propaganda directed to Viet Minh troops reiterates these points, with particular emphasis on "respecting the religious beliefs, customs, and habits of the people."

Although exhortations of this nature may indicate an attempt to counteract unfavorable behavior and poor morale of Viet Minh troops, no such broad, all-inclusive directive as the 8-point decree had been issued before by the Viet Minh command. The order, therefore, may have represented Viet Minh anticipation of coming action on a scale and in territory not previously envisaged, and possibly beyond the scope of previous possibilities.

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C. (II B 6) Propaganda Indications of Chinese Communist Intentions toward Vietnam:

1. The intentions of the Chinese Communists toward Indochina remain obscure in the propaganda. Affirmations of support for the Viet Minh are couched only in the most general terms in the propaganda emanating from Peking Government sources, while Viet Minh references to China remain on a comparable level with those made to the Soviet Union. Certain belligerent and defensive elements, similar to those which constituted the bulk of the Chinese Communist propaganda build-up immediately before the Chinese intervention in Korea, have appeared with increased frequency in both Soviet and Chinese Communist propaganda, and have to some extent been echoed by the Viet Minh. These elements, however, have thus far occurred without a definite pattern and have not been built up as a major component of the propaganda. At their present level, they do not constitute a well-defined propaganda trend, although such a trend could be built up to justify eventual overt action by the Communist bloc with respect to Vietnam.
- a. Chinese Communist propaganda broadcasts to and about Indochina* note the achievements and victories of the Viet Minh but do not identify China as an active participant. Certain "anniversaries" and other occasions are taken to publicize statements of sympathy and support from Chinese Communist leaders. Generally, however, Peking treats the Indochina conflict as one expression of the Asian people's desire for national independence and their resistance to Western colonialism and aggression. Peking propaganda, like Ho comment, apparently seeks to minimize the historic antagonism felt by the Vietnamese people for the Chinese, by avoiding specific references to the status of Overseas Chinese in Indochina and by emphasizing the "unity" of the Chinese and Vietnamese peoples.** The bulk of Chinese comment on the situation in Indochina relates to the struggle in Vietnam. References to Laos and Cambodia have largely been limited to accounts of activities of these countries' resistance delegates at various international Communist gatherings.

* Peking's seven hour per week Tonkinese-language broadcasts constitute approximately nine percent of the Chinese Communist Radio's foreign service, a relatively high percentage. News and discussions of the situation in Indochina make up three percent of all Peking broadcast content, the highest percentage of attention devoted to any country in Southeast Asia. However, original comment is infrequent; the bulk of Peking radio material on Indochina consists of battle reports and official Viet Minh statements, transmitted by the Ho Government's VIETNAM NEWS AGENCY.

** Avoidance of the Overseas Chinese issue in Indochina contrasts sharply with Peking's self-assumed role of defender of Overseas Chinese interests in other Southeast Asian countries. Thailand and the British Administration in Malaya have been special targets of abuse in connection with alleged mistreatment and persecution of Overseas Chinese.

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- b. Soviet radio propaganda* also features the achievements of the Viet Minh, with expressions of Soviet sympathy voiced only in the most general terms, and usually even more restrained than those emanating from China. Except for periodic reviews of the military situation, the Indochina conflict has been discussed by Moscow largely in terms of the world-wide East-West conflict and the Asian peoples' "liberation struggle" against colonial domination. Like Peking, Moscow devotes the bulk of its material to the situation in Vietnam, and has mentioned Laos and Cambodia mainly in connection with world-wide Communist events.
- c. The degree of Chinese influence on the Ho Government's policy and propaganda effort is uncertain. However, a known transmission belt of information and propaganda exists in the form of messages and news exchanged between the Ho radio and an unidentified radio outlet in Communist China which uses the call letters GMH. A study of the traffic over this circuit reveals that the Chinese side acts as the initiator of certain policy and propaganda directives subsequently carried out by the Viet Minh. The Chinese side also requests specific information and propaganda support from the Viet Minh source, in the form of messages to international Communist gatherings, comment on world affairs, and details of certain developments in Indochina. A recent GMH request for "more material" in memory of Stalin was promptly followed by voluminous accounts of Stalin memorial meetings and special commentaries from the VIETNAM NEWS AGENCY.

A possible indication of what may be direct Chinese policy guidance or influence on the Ho Government may be seen in the fact that the December 1952 Resistance Anniversary and Christmas messages of Ho Chi Minh were virtually verbatim repetitions--both as to content and phraseology--of the "suggestions" forwarded via GMH to Ho from Hoang Van Hoan, the Viet Minh ambassador in Peking. Apart from the question of the degree of Chinese control, this exchange of messages reveals that at least one of the formulators of Ho Government policy--the message contained the opening call for agrarian reform and peasant mobilization--is in Peking, where there is every opportunity for direct consultation with the ranking members of the Communist regime.

* Moscow broadcasts seven hours per week in Tonkinese, these broadcasts constituting slightly more than one percent of the Soviet radio's foreign service. The situation in Indochina is discussed in less than one-half of one percent of Moscow radio comment--a low volume, comparable to similar absence of focus on other areas which are not in the forefront of the East-West struggle. Roughly one-third of the propaganda is directed to Vietnamese listeners. Of the remainder, the bulk goes to other Asian audiences. Indochinese listeners generally hear about the weakness and disunity of the West, the Soviet home audience is treated to accounts of Viet Minh successes, while Western listeners are told about U.S. aggressive and imperialist designs in Vietnam.

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- d. During the past six months, and particularly since the beginning of this year, there has been a noticeable increase of attention in both Soviet and Chinese Communist propaganda to the situation in Indochina, including prominent mention of the activities of Cambodian and Laotian delegates to the Peking and Vienna "peace congresses." The Soviet interest in Indochina is highlighted by Malenkov's reference to "the courageous fight for freedom and national independence waged by the people of Vietnam" in his Stalin funeral oration of 9 March. The reference followed a similar one-sentence mention of the Korean war. Subsequent Soviet propaganda has, in particular, emphasized the "growing strength" and "certain victory" of the "liberation" movement, and has shown an unusual interest in Vietnamese internal developments--a departure from previous practice. Recent Soviet reports, for example, have featured the Ho Government's agrarian reform and peasant mobilization program.
- e. Soviet and Chinese propaganda has lately contained certain beligerent and defensive elements which reveal heightened concern with the possible effects of a stepped-up Western effort in Indochina. These elements have to a certain extent been reflected also in Viet Minh propaganda. Prompt and vehement reaction has been registered to the latest U.S.-French talks, with emphasis on the charge that plans to augment the size of Bao Dai Government troops are merely part of an over-all U.S.-directed effort to "extend the war in Asia and pit Asians against Asians." During the past two weeks, Chinese propaganda has prominently mentioned Laos with the charge that the French-allied "bogus" Laotian Government, by expanding its army, was implementing the U.S. policy of inducing Asians to fight Asians. Chinese sources have also featured the accusation that Thai Government forces were actively helping the French Union troops in Laos.* This accusation has not yet been repeated by the Ho Government, but previous Viet Minh propaganda has asserted that the United States intended to have Thailand "reoccupy" the Cambodian provinces of Battambang and Siemreap.
- f. Although the primacy of Soviet leadership is reiterated on every occasion, Viet Minh propaganda has continued its intensive affirmation of Sino-Vietnamese friendship and its efforts to overcome the traditional Vietnamese suspicion and antagonism toward the Chinese. Recent statements have pointed up the "teacher-pupil" relationship and have again referred to the "ties of blood" existing between the two peoples. Similar references to "blood relationship" marked Chinese propaganda prior to Chinese intervention in Korea.

* This latest charge is apparently also part of an intensified revival of Peking's virulent denunciations of the Songgram Government. The Chinese Communists have also claimed that Thailand plans to conscript its Overseas Chinese for military purposes under Eisenhower's program to have Asians fight Asians.

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- g. The recent establishment of mail service between China and the Democratic Republic of Vietnam will apparently facilitate Sino-Vietnamese contact and strengthen the relationship. The official directives state that "in order to guarantee smooth mail service, names and addresses of letters destined for the Democratic Republic of Vietnam should be written in both Chinese and Vietnamese." Effective mail service is likely to increase Chinese Communist influence among the Overseas Chinese in both the Viet Minh and French-controlled areas of Indochina.
- h. The purposes and effect of the much-publicized formation by Peking of the "Autonomous Thai Region" in Southern Yunnan are not clear insofar as they may have a bearing on future developments in Indochina with its considerable Thai minority population. Chinese Communist policy on recognition of the Thai ethnic group appears to be in contradiction to the Ho Government's vigorous disavowal of the "Autonomous Thai Territory" established by the French and the Bao Dai Government.
- i. At their present level, the various belligerent and defensive elements in the propaganda which could be built up to justify eventual overt action by the Communist bloc--and specifically by Communist China--in Vietnam do not constitute a well-defined propaganda trend. The current propaganda focus on Vietnam (and broadly speaking, on all of Southeast Asia) could be explained by a number of alternatives, including principally (1) the Communist intention to keep the issue of the Asian "liberation struggle" alive and distinct from any settlement in Korea, and (2) increased Communist concern with the possibility of a more effective, dynamic Western policy in Asia stemming from U.S. leadership under the Eisenhower administration and the increasingly closer collaboration of the major Western powers in Asia.

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